

WHAT'S *New*

in the Metropolitan Police Department



*A weekly update for residents, visitors,
and workers in the District of Columbia*

Friday, January 23, 2004

CHIEF RAMSEY SWEARS IN 23 NEW OFFICERS, AS THE MPDC CONTINUES TO BUILD TOWARD 3,800

District neighborhoods will have nearly two dozen new officers on patrol beginning next week, as members of Recruit Class 2003-1 were sworn in by Chief Ramsey during graduation ceremonies on January 23. Prior to receiving their badges, the 23 new officers completed approximately six months of academic, physical and tactical training at the MPDC's Maurice T. Turner Jr., Institute of Police Science. All 23 of the new officers are being assigned to uniformed neighborhood patrols in the seven police districts. Friday's graduation ceremony, held at that Office of Personnel Management in Northwest DC, was the first of several officer graduations planned over the next few months, as the MPDC continues to build toward its goal of 3,800 officers. The MPDC's sworn strength now stands at approximately 3,725. Mayor Williams, with support from the DC Council, has made increasing the number of MPDC officers a top priority of his public safety agenda. All of the additional officers being hired will be assigned to PSA (Police Service Area) patrols.

- ① Upcoming officer graduations are scheduled for February 27 and March 12.
- ① To learn more about career opportunities in the MPDC, and to apply online, visit:
<http://www.mpdcc.dc.gov/about/employ/officer.shtml>

"COACHES AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE" PROGRAM CONTINUES INTO WINTER BASKETBALL SEASON

After a successful start during the fall football season, the MPDC is once again teaming up with high school coaches, principals and teachers, parents and students in a public awareness campaign to curb gun violence involving young people. Called "Coaches Against Gun Violence," the program is organized by the DC-based Alliance for Justice. During a series of high school basketball games this winter, police and school officials, as well as students and other community members concerned about gun violence, will hold "dedication ceremonies" either during halftime or before the games. The ceremonies are designed to call attention to the problem of gun violence and youth, and to encourage young people and adults to get involved in putting an end to gun tragedies in DC. The first "Coaches Against Gun Violence" dedication ceremony will take place on Tuesday afternoon, January 27, during the Dunbar vs. Wilson basketball game at Wilson Senior High School, 3950 Chesapeake Street, NW. Tragically, several Wilson students have been the victims of gun violence in their communities over the past few years, including the homicides of star athlete Andre Wallace and classmate Natasha Marsh in Northeast on February 8, 2000. DC's first homicide victim of 2004, Javon Gaskins, was also a Wilson student; he was killed on the morning of January 1, in the 300 block of Anacostia Road, SE. Nationally, eight young people die as a result of gun violence each day in the US.

- ① Learn more about Coaches Against Gun Violence at:
http://www.allianceforjustice.org/student/against_violence/index.html
- ① Upcoming "Coaches Against Gun Violence" dedications include the February 3rd game at Roosevelt High School, and two games on February 6, at Woodson and Gonzaga High Schools. For a complete list, contact the Alliance for Justice at (202) 822-6070.

DECEMBER 2003 STATS SHOW AGGRESSIVE SPEEDING DOWN IN DC

The prevalence of aggressive speeding in DC continues to fall, according to the latest statistics from the MPDC's Photo Radar Speeding Reduction Program. In fact, fewer people were speeding aggressively in DC's photo radar enforcement zones in December 2003 than during any month since the automated speeding reduction program was first implemented in the summer of 2001. Last month, only 5.4 percent of the nearly 1 million vehicles monitored by photo radar were found to be traveling above the speed limit threshold established for the program. That is substantially lower than the 31 percent aggressive speeding rate during July 2001, when the program first started. December was the second month in a row that aggressive speeding reached a record low level in DC; in November 2003, just under 6 percent of vehicles monitored were speeding aggressively. Average speeds on residential streets, arteries and highways all continue to be substantially lower than they were when the program started. For example, on streets with a 35-mph speed limit, the average speed of all vehicles detected by photo radar was 34.9 mph in December 2003—down from 43.7 mph in July 2001. During the first 29 months of the program, nearly 778,000 photo radar speeding citations were issued and more than 557,000 were paid, resulting in \$41.6 million in fines.

ARSON TASK FORCE INVESTIGATES A 34TH SUSPICIOUS FIRE AS BEING SIMILAR IN NATURE

The regional Arson Task Force now considers a fire that occurred early in the morning of January 22, at 3814 55th Avenue in Bladensburg, Maryland, to be “similar in nature” to a series of arsons that have taken place in DC, Prince George's County and northern Virginia over the past several months. The total number of arsons is now 34, of which 13 have been conclusively linked. Once again, the Task Force, which includes the MPDC, is calling on the public to help identify this dangerous fire setter. The Task Force believes he is a member of the greater DC/Prince George's County community and, therefore, is known here. The task force has released a description of a possible suspect, as well as a list of possible traits and characteristics that might assist in making this arsonist recognizable to individuals (including family members) who may know him. A \$25,000 reward is being offered for information leading to the arrest of this serial arsonist. As long as this person remains at large, investigators warn that communities in the region, as well as the arsonist himself, remain in danger.

NEWS & NOTES

Faith-Based Anti-Crime Group Organizing. Leaders of the faith-based community in the 2nd and 4th Police Districts are coming together to work with the MPDC and other community leaders in developing anti-violence and anti-crime programs. Among their first efforts are a day-long seminar and a “Celebration of Life Go-Go,” both scheduled for Saturday, January 24. For more information about the Faith Based Community Action Partnership, contact Kathy Minor or Officer Jeanette Williams at the MPDC's Regional Operations Command (ROC)-North, (202) 576-6600.

PSA Restructuring Hearing. DC Council Judiciary Committee Chair Kathy Patterson has scheduled a hearing on the MPDC's Police Service Area (PSA) Restructuring plan for Tuesday, February 24, at 10 am in Room 412 of the Wilson Building. The plan, which reduces the number of PSAs from 83 to 43, is designed to improve police services in DC neighborhoods and enhance public involvement in community policing. For more information, including maps of the proposed PSAs and police districts, visit http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/districts/PSAs_proposed.shtm.

Project ChildSafe Gun Lock Program. Registered firearms owners in DC are reminded that they can obtain free gun locks through the MPDC's Firearms Registration Section through the national Project ChildSafe initiative. Details at <http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/comm/childsafes.htm>

① Get the latest results on the Photo Radar Speeding Reduction Program at:
http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/traffic/speedresults_text.shtm

① For more information about DC's 4-year-old red-light camera program, including the locations of intersections equipped with cameras, go to:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/traffic/redlight.shtm>

① For more information, read the Task Force news release at:
http://www.goprincegeorgescounty.com/government/publicsafety/fire/arson_012204.asp

① The Task Force has established several ways for residents to report tips, including a telephone number (301-77-ARSON), a mailing address (PO Box 211, Bladensburg, MD, 20710), and an email address 77arson@co.pg.md.us.

DATA BOX

Homicides (as of 1/23/04)

- 2004: 18
- 2003: 11
- % Change: +63.6%

Adult Arrests (week end. 1/17/04)

- Total: 765
- Drugs: 155
- Homicide: 4
- Motor Vehicle Theft: 14
- Prostitution/Sex Offenses: 33

Firearm Recoveries (as of 1/20/04)

- January: 120
- 2003 Total: 1,982

Traffic Fatalities (as of 1/23/04)

- 2004: 5
- 2003: 3
- % Change: 66.7%

Information, ideas, or comments about this service? Send an e-mail to **KEVIN MORISON**, MPDC's Director of Corporate Communications, at kevin.morison@dc.gov. Would you like to have this information e-mailed to you? Just go to our Website and register with **Crimereports.com**.

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